

NEW RIVER TRAIL STATE PARK
MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 6, 2003
JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. Committee members in attendance introduced themselves and stated the organization they represented.

Bob Munson gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda and shared a letter from The Honorable W. Roscoe Reynolds in which he thanked advisory committee members for their contribution to the master planning effort. He also sent his regrets for being unable to attend the meeting.

The committee then discussed a series of questions about the park's resources, facilities, uses, users, and direction. The results of the discussion follows.

Park Use

1. In what ways do visitors currently use the park?
 - Hike
 - Bike
 - Run
 - Walk
 - Equestrian
 - Bird watching
 - Fishing
 - Jet Ski
 - Kayak
 - Camping
 - Cross country ski
 - Dog walk/pets
 - Schools/education
 - Exploration
 - Caving
 - Camp/Races
 - Sculpture
 - Canoeing
 - Railroad history
 - Mining history
 - Festival/special events
 - Interpretive education/programs
 - Picnicking
 - Playground
 - Golf carts (handicap accessible)
 - Music
 - Weddings
 - Scenic beauty

2. What reasons do people have for **not** using the park?
 - Safety
 - No interest
 - Proximity/travel distance
 - Lack of information
 - Non-motorized park
 - Horse manure
 - Lack of handicap access
3. What is the public asking for, that is not currently provided?
 - RV camping
 - Equestrian camp
 - Non motorized
 - More parking at Austinville, Galax)
 - Roller blading
(Patterns of permitted park use)
 - Access to river
 - Bank fishing and boats
 - Trailside camping
 - Canoe camping at Hiwassee and Fries
 - Concessions at Draper and along trail (especially north end of trail)
 - Outfitter/concessions/rentals in Pulaski and Galax
 - B&B's and overnight facilities
 - Tours of mine at Austinville
 - Organize special events/facilities that highlight area cultural, historical, interpretive themes, and railroad history

Park Facility

4. What areas/facilities are currently heavily used?
 - Galax to Cliffview
 - Draper (urban access points)
 - Austinville, Galax, Dora
 - Foster Falls
 - Fries
5. What areas/facilities are currently under-used?
 - Allisonia
 - Lone Ash
6. Are existing support facilities adequate? (Parking, Restrooms, etc.)
 - Parking
 - Restrooms(anywhere there are portapotties)
 - Hiwassee
 - Horseshoe
 - United States Forest Service Recreation Area (New River Recreation Area)

7. What improvements are a high priority over the next five years?
- Jackson's Ferry Campground
 - New River Recreation Area
 - Jackson's cemetery moved to Shot Tower site
 - Boat launches
 - Concession services
 - Hotel
 - Restrooms
 - Parking
 - Fishing
 - Canoe trail map and mile markers
 - Drinking fountains
 - Solar call boxes along trail
 - Cell towers
 - Emergency/911 services
 - Interpretive kiosks
 - Interpretive programs (historical, cultural, geology, astrology)
 - Renovation of orphanage and restaurant (wedding receptions, cabins, conferences (30-35 rooms maximum)
 - Orphanage was former industrial school for girls 12-21 years old
 - Restore to Historic standards

Cultural and Natural Resources

8. Are you aware of any significant cultural or natural resources that should be addressed in the planning process?

Natural Heritage Resources

- Hellbenders
- Fisheries
- Lone Ashe, Austinville, Crooked Creek
- Virginia Spirea

Cultural/Historical Resources

- Chestnut yard turn table
- Cliffview turn table
- Fries turn table
- Ivanhoe turn table
- Ice house
- Horse barn

Private Sector Involvement

9. Are there other similar public or private facilities in the area?
- VA Creeper (Damascus)

- Appalachian Trail
- Damascus bicycle livery
- Virginia Highlands horse trail
- Livery across from Cliffview
- KOA at Austinville
- Wayne Beasley
- Roberts bike shop
- Roy Hackler
- Fries/Independence canoe livery
- River Song cabins
- Homestead Inn/B&B

10. Are there appropriate private concession opportunities in this park?
Horse, bicycle, boat, and tube concessions are appropriate.
B&B's and other accommodations are needed.
Outdoor equipment sales
Food and drink services

Park Direction

11. What do you feel is the current focus/theme of this State Park?
- Natural Resource Theme
 - Non motorized trail use
 - Short paved section or maybe parallel to trail? (NO!!)
- Asphalt section in both urban ends-no support
Consider long term maintenance cost
- Trail will be a non-motorized trail open to pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian uses only.
 - ADA access limited to approved mobility assistance devices that meet the requirements set forth in the regulations. (Electrical chairs are acceptable if they meet the 32" width requirements)
12. What do you feel makes this state park unique in the Virginia State Park System?
- Longest, linear park
 - Parallels New River (45 miles next to water body)
 - Diversity of settings, landscapes, experiences
13. What should be the future direction of this state park?
- Passive recreation---non-motorized
 - Interpretive
 - Scenic
 - Wilderness experience
 - Secluded

- Leisurely environment
 - Natural surface
14. What should be considered in the long range plans for this park?
- *Address the issue of “golf cart” use. Permits for mobility assisted devices should meet ADA standards. No internal combustion machines. It is non-motorized.
- Do not over develop park
 - Maintain rural/pastoral scene
 - Protection of viewshed and immediate area of park-especially land between trail and River
 - Build political/local alliances with landowners, etc.
 - Seek protection of trail environment with zoning and other land use restrictions by local governments
 - Publicize successful acquisitions of riverside properties and protection efforts

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM. The next meeting will be held on June 2, at 6:30 PM at the Jackson Elementary School. Subsequent meetings are also scheduled for July 14, August 4, and September 8. Public meetings will be held in July and August. The September meeting may not need to be held.